

BACKGROUND ON COLOMBIA

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Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources
Committee on Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
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Colombia:

2005 Crop Estimates

- Overall the crop estimate increased 26% to 144,000 hectares, but this was due to a substantial change in the survey area which saw an *81% expansion*. (105,400 hectares under cultivation in the areas surveyed in 2004, 38,600 hectares in areas not surveyed in 2004.)
- Cultivation *declined* 8% in those areas surveyed both in 2004 and 2005. The drop was from 114,100 hectares in 2004 to 105,400 in 2005. Cultivation fell in nearly all growing areas where eradication was employed, Putumayo being a key exception. Cultivation increased in all growing areas with no eradication.
- Growers are reacting to intense spray operations and are moving to non-sprayed on low-spray areas.
- Increases occurred in remote areas, regions uncontrolled by the government or areas where spraying is prohibited (e.g. buffer zone along Ecuador border or national parks)
- Replanted fields are smaller than previous, eradicated fields in areas subject to spraying.
- Bottom line, spraying works, where there was not spraying there was an increase, where spraying occurred, in general cultivation is declining.
- Due to the improved security situation in Colombia, law enforcement and military personnel are able to broaden their reach in the country, making the discovery of coca fields more likely.

Key Achievements: Eradication and Interdiction

For the first time ever, the U.S.-supported Anti-Narcotics Police Directorate (DIRAN) sprayed over 140,000 hectares of illicit crops in 2005.

- The Government of Colombia (GOC) also reports that a record 31,000 hectares were manually eradicated in 2005.
- Between 2001 and 2004, aerial eradication reduced coca cultivation by one third and opium poppy cultivation by two thirds in Colombia (2005 cultivation figures were not expected until late March 2006).
- Estimated potential production of pure cocaine declined another 6.5 percent in 2004 to 430 metric tons, its lowest level in at least seven years.

- The CNP, led by DIRAN, again broke all interdiction records in 2005, with over 94 metric tons of processed cocaine (HCl) and cocaine base seized, 107 HCl laboratories destroyed and 779 base labs destroyed.
- Combined public forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Police) seized a record total of 223 metric tons of cocaine and cocaine base and destroyed 137 HCl laboratories.

Key Achievements: Public Security

- For the first time in the country's history, the GOC has established a permanent government presence in all of Colombia's 1,098 municipalities.
- Major security indicators improved again in 2005:
 - homicides were down by 13 percent;
 - kidnappings were down by 51 percent;
 - overall terrorist attacks were down by 21 percent; and
 - The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) was down by 15 percent.
- A Gallup poll conducted in January 2006 reveals the new optimism which Colombians share about their public security:
 - 72 percent of Colombians believe their country is more secure today than one year ago.
 - 76 percent have a favorable opinion of the Colombian military (compared to 71 percent for the Catholic Church).
 - Colombians who hold a favorable view toward the country's principal illegal armed groups - the paramilitary AUC and the guerilla National Liberation Army (ELN) and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) - register just 7 percent, 2 percent, and 1 percent of the population, respectively.
 - Before Plan Colombia started in 1999, more than half the populace believed Colombia's guerilla forces could take control of power in Colombia. Today only a quarter believe that is still possible.
 - More than two thirds - 69 percent - hold a favorable opinion of Plan Colombia.
- Real spending on defense has increased from \$2.6 billion in 2001, to a projected \$4.48 billion (USD equivalent) in 2006 under President Uribe's Administration. Adjusted for inflation, that represents real growth of over 30 percent.

Key Achievements: Organizational Attack on Narcoterrorists

- Streamlined extradition procedures have resulted in over 300 extraditions since President Uribe's inauguration on Aug 7, 2002), with 304 Colombian nationals and 11 non-nationals extradited by the end of 2005.
- In 2005, three FARC commanders were killed, many other important leaders were either killed or captured, and other important narco-traffickers were arrested and are now awaiting extradition to the United States.

- Increased military pressure resulted in the December 2002 unilateral ceasefire declaration by the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), the largest of the paramilitary groups.
- Over 25,000 members of the paramilitary United Self Defense Forces (AUC) have been demobilized since 2003 (with over 60% of those in the latter half of 2005). In addition, almost 3,000 members of the FARC, AUC, and the National Liberation Army (ELN) deserted in 2005. Since August 2002, when President Uribe took office, almost 8,000 members of the terrorist groups have deserted individually.

Key Achievements: Extending Rule of Law

- The Culture of Lawfulness program has taught over 16,000 ninth-graders in 190 schools using over 320 teachers who stress the importance of lawfulness in society.
- The judicial system continues the transition to an oral accusatorial system, causing a change in the roles and responsibilities of the judges, prosecutors, and criminal investigators. The system is now functioning in Bogota and three municipal areas. Six new municipal areas will be added in 2006, including Medellin and Cali. Over 17,000 prosecutors, judges, and criminal investigators received intensive training in the new accusatory system in 2005.
- USG programs have supported the cultivation of over 76,000 hectares of legal crops and completed more than 1,000 social and infrastructure projects in the last five years. More than 64,000 families in 17 departments have benefited from these programs.

Challenges Ahead:

- Continuing transfer of greater responsibilities in counter-narcotics funding and operations to the GOC, while maintaining operational results;
- countering the rapid replanting of coca in areas sprayed by the eradication program;
- dealing with increased illicit cultivation in Colombia's national parks;
- nationalizing USG supported programs;
- supporting the GOC's efforts to demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants, while advancing reconciliation and victim reparations processes;
- increasing the number of police to deal with the power vacuum created by the demobilization of the AUC;
- gaining control of the vast Pacific coastal zones;
- maintaining an aging air fleet that is required to fly more hours every year; and
- maintaining the political will of the Colombian people to confront and defeat their internal enemies.

Interdiction

It is crucial that the Federal Government pursue the most effective interdiction strategy possible. In what appears to be a rapidly developing partnership, illicit drug

production and smuggling is being directly linked to terrorist cells around the world.^{1 2 3} Traffickers smuggle drugs, money, people, information, weapons, and substances the same way terrorists do. Sometimes, narco-traffickers are terrorists.^{4 5} When speaking about the Colombian insurgency, Chairman Tom Davis of the House Government Reform Committee stated, “These are not idealistic liberators; they’re thugs and terrorists, funded by the illicit drug trade.”⁶ When drugs are interdicted, the financing of terrorist operations becomes more difficult.⁷

For the third straight year, joint service, interagency, and multinational forces in the transit zone have seized and disrupted a record amount of cocaine.⁸ A critical element of the strategy to disrupt the market focuses U.S. interdiction efforts on seizing cocaine and other illicit drugs bound for the U.S. from South America in the transit zone. The transit zone is a six million square mile area that encompasses Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the eastern Pacific Ocean. Transit zone seizures and disruptions in 2005 amounted to 254 metric tons of cocaine, compared to 219 metric tons in 2004 and 176 metric tons in 2003.⁹

Transit zone interdiction is a team effort that relies on the successful execution of several steps in an interdiction continuum, including the collection and dissemination of actionable intelligence, the detection and monitoring of suspect vessels, and the physical interdiction of those vessels.¹⁰ The primary operations center and coordinator for detecting and monitoring suspected air and maritime drug trafficking events in the transit zone is Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South). Located in Key West, Florida, JIATF-South includes representatives from Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, and nations such as France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

¹ Miles, Donna, *Rumsfeld, Equadoran Leaders Vow Continued Cooperation*, AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE, November 16, 2004, at http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11162004_2004111604.html (last visited February 24, 2006).

² Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers on January 6, 2004 at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040106-secdef1104.html> (last visited February 24, 2006).

³ See 2006 DoD Counternarcotics Budget: *Does It Deliver the Necessary Support? Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform*, 109th Cong. (May 10, 2005)(testimony of Mary Beth Long, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics).

⁴ Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources drug control budget briefing with Department of Defense Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counternarcotics, Nov. 10, 2005.

⁵ See U.S. State Department, *Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, 2004, at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/45323.pdf> (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁶ See *The War Against Drugs and Thugs: A Status Report on Plan Colombia Successes and Remaining Challenges: Hearing before the House Committee on Govt. Reform*, 109th Cong. (2004) (statement of Chairman Tom Davis).

⁷ The White House, *National Drug Control Strategy* (February 2006), at 33.

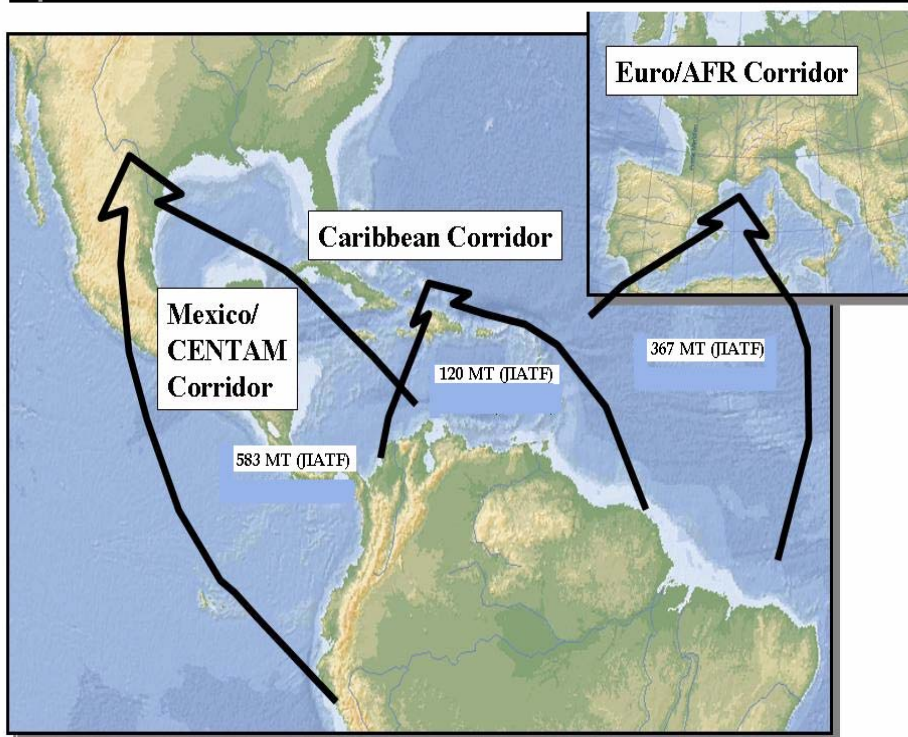
⁸ Id. Joint service, interagency, and multinational forces in the transit seized 254 metric tons of cocaine in 2005.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Id, at 35.

What we expect to see

Projection of Cocaine Flows for 2006 in Metric Tons



The chart depicted above reflects JIATF-South's estimates of the intercontinental flow of cocaine out of the source countries. However, estimates of the drug flow through the transit zone are problematic. In its assessment for 2004, ONDCP reported that between 325 metric tons and 675 metric tons of cocaine may be moving toward the United States.¹¹ Given the lower and upper bound flow estimates, the Committee has deep reservations regarding the credibility of eradication, production, interdiction, and usage estimates and performance measures.^{12 13}

The majority of "frontline" interdiction personnel and assets are contained within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In addition, the Department of Defense (DoD) has been designated as the single lead agency of the Federal Government for the

¹¹ DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 6 (Nov. 2005).

¹² Id., at 25.

¹³ The principal source of information about cocaine flow in the transit zone is ONDCP's Interagency Assessment of Cocaine Movement (IACM). The IACM is prepared annually for ONDCP by an interagency group representing departments and agencies involved in U.S. counternarcotics efforts. For 2003 and 2004, according to the interagency group, the IACM's estimate of the amount of cocaine available for export was too low in relation to estimated U.S. and non-U.S. demand for cocaine after taking into account seizures and disruptions.

detection and monitoring of the aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the U.S.¹⁴ DoD carries out this responsibility by providing aircraft and ships to patrol the transit zones, utilizing radars and other technologies to monitor drug smuggling routes, and employing tactical intelligence units. With the ongoing DoD and DHS focus on the global war on terrorism and illegal immigration, the Committee is deeply concerned that many of the resources within these departments traditionally integral to drug interdiction will be increasingly diverted for anti-terror and immigration missions, and the Administration is not adequately addressing the interagency detection and monitoring capabilities that support U.S. interdiction efforts in the transit zone.

Increasing the challenge of interdicting drugs in the transit zones is the mounting shortage of detecting, monitoring and interdiction assets (ships, planes, and helicopters) allocated to this critical mission. This is the result of the Administration's failure to plan to replace aging DHS and DoD assets. The shortage of these assets is perhaps more pronounced recently because of substantial gains that have been made in developing "known actionable" maritime events.¹⁵ Moreover, the Director of JIATF-South recently reconfirmed what Congress was told last year: JIATF-South now has more actionable drug intelligence than there are interdiction assets available to respond to smuggling events.¹⁶ The impressive level of intelligence is displayed by the accompanying graphic in which known, specific, smuggling events are broken down to the means of transportation used ("go-fast" speed boat (57.2%), fishing vessel (30.5%), motor vessel (9.6%), other (2.7%).

¹⁴ 10 U.S.C. §124 (1989).

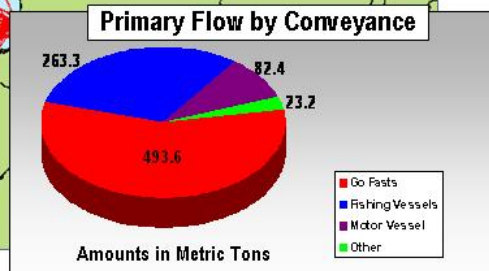
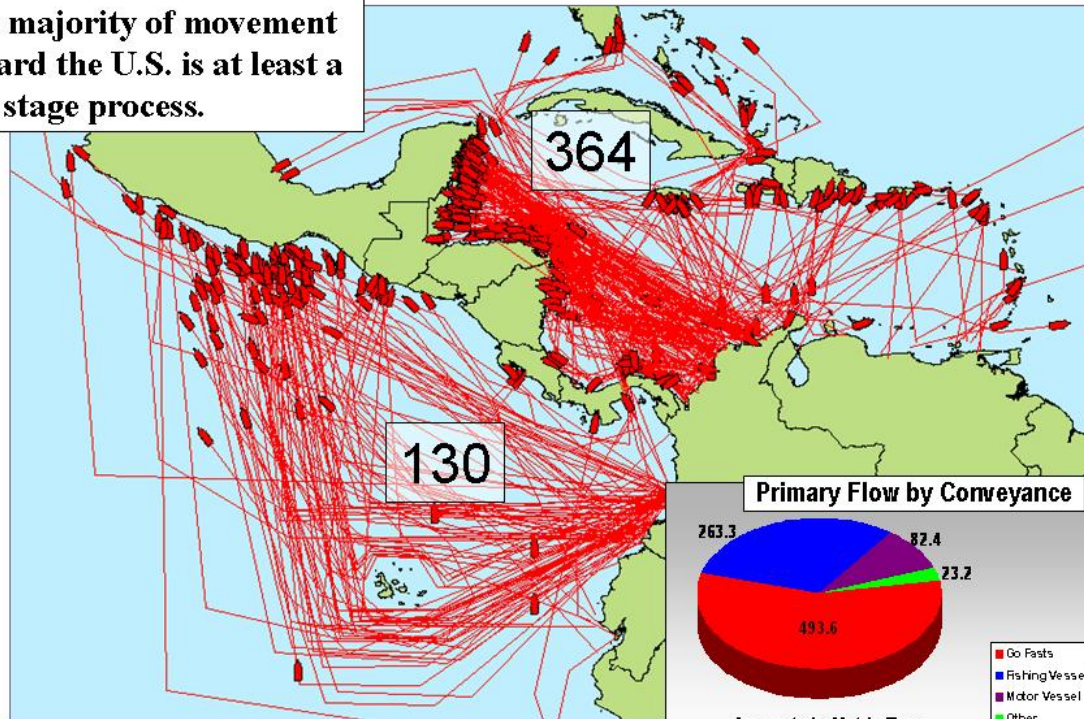
¹⁵ DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 17 (Nov. 2005).

¹⁶ Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources visit to JIATF-South, Key West, Florida on, Jan. 12, 2006.

Maritime Activity

1 Jan 2004 – 30 Apr 2005

The majority of movement toward the U.S. is at least a two stage process.

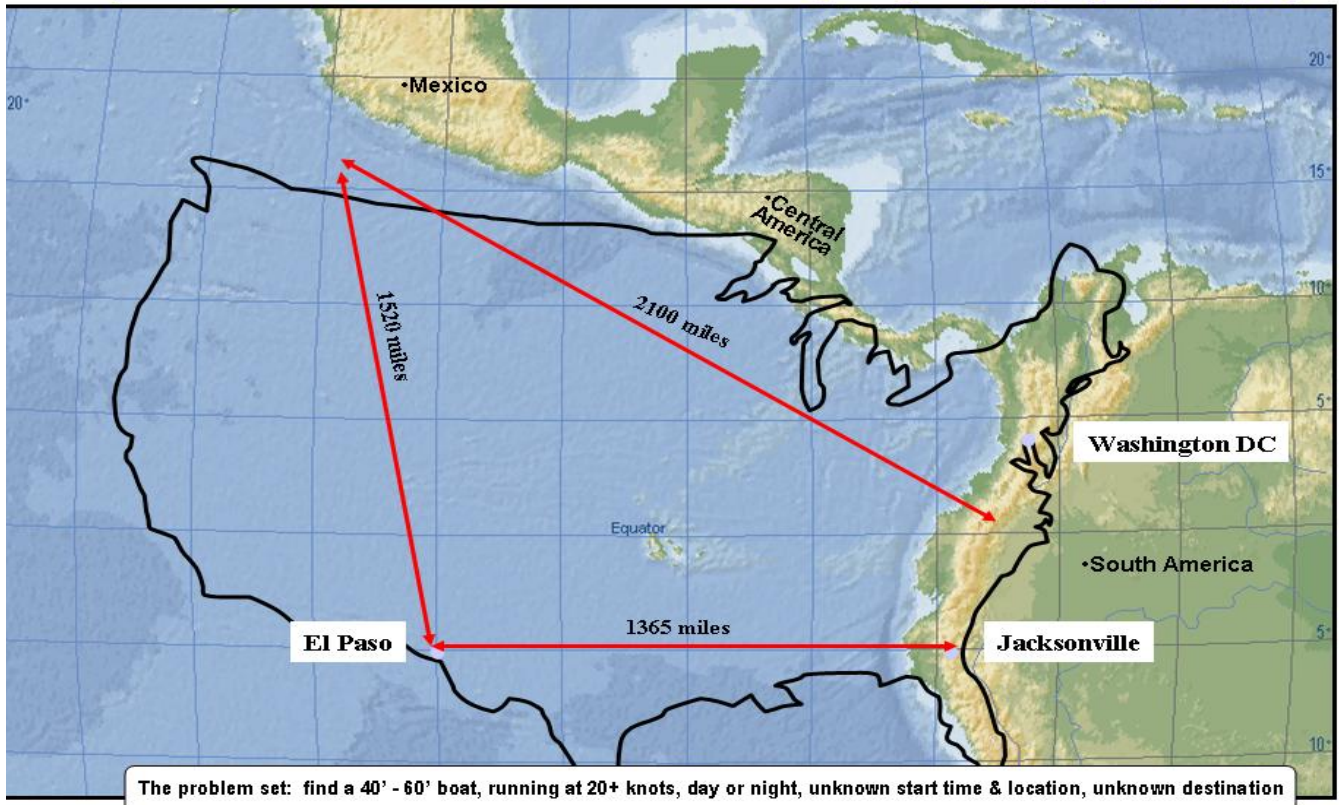


The Committee is alarmed that the Administration has not directly addressed the issue of insufficient interdiction assets. Equally troubling, ONDCP does not identify and discuss this issue in its 2007 Strategy, other than to highlight the improvements in intelligence. The Committee is concerned that until ONDCP clearly articulates the current shortages in drug interdiction assets, the Administration will not provide the support necessary to respond.

Another crucial piece necessary to understanding the challenge of the interdiction process addresses the vast distances associated with the high seas maritime transit zones that are manipulated by drug smugglers to their strategic advantage. The Eastern Pacific maritime transit zone, as depicted in the graphic nearby, places tremendous strains on U.S. interdiction intelligence, personnel, and assets. Over time the smugglers have measured the interdiction capabilities of these assets and have continually utilized these known limits to exploit weaknesses, irresolvable without an additional commitment of assets, to continue the flow of illegal drugs into the continental United States.

The Tyranny of Distance

Size of Eastern Pacific vs. Size of Continental U.S.



In addition to the vast distance being covered, the means most frequently used by smugglers, even if detected, present a substantial challenge to the interdiction mission. High-speed "go-fast" vessels are used in the majority of the smuggling events in the transit zone. "Go-fast" vessels, which are very hard to detect by ship and helicopter acting without maritime patrol aircraft, are capable of speeds up to 40+ knots while hauling as much as four metric tons of cocaine. In the Eastern Pacific, these speed boats seek to avoid U.S. interdiction forces by taking broad, round-about paths into the middle of the Pacific Ocean before heading north to Mexico. In the Caribbean, they leave Colombia's North Coast at night, rapidly transit across the Caribbean basin, and then hug the Central American coastline in the voyage north to Mexico.

The number of go-fast boats involved in smuggling has increased substantially since 1995. Such craft are small, very fast, nearly invisible to radar, and difficult to see in daylight when painted in blue (seized go-fast (left) with four 200 horsepower outboard engines is pictured with a U.S. Coast Guard over-the-horizon small boat).



Since calendar year 2000, JIATF-South officials report that they had information about more maritime drug movements than they could detect visually.¹⁷ The number of “known actionable” maritime events in the western Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean more than doubled from 154 in 2000 to 330 in 2004.¹⁸ According to JIATF-South officials, in many cases the maritime event is too far away for available ships and aircraft to go to the area and visually locate the suspected drug movement. However, once JIATF-South locates a suspect movement, the disruption rate has significantly increased since 2000 – from less than 60 percent in 2000 and 2001 to over 80 percent in 2003 to 2005.¹⁹

The critical need for Maritime Patrol Aircraft

One of the most critical areas of concern to the Committee is the sharp reduction of DoD and DHS maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) patrol hours. MPA assets are the

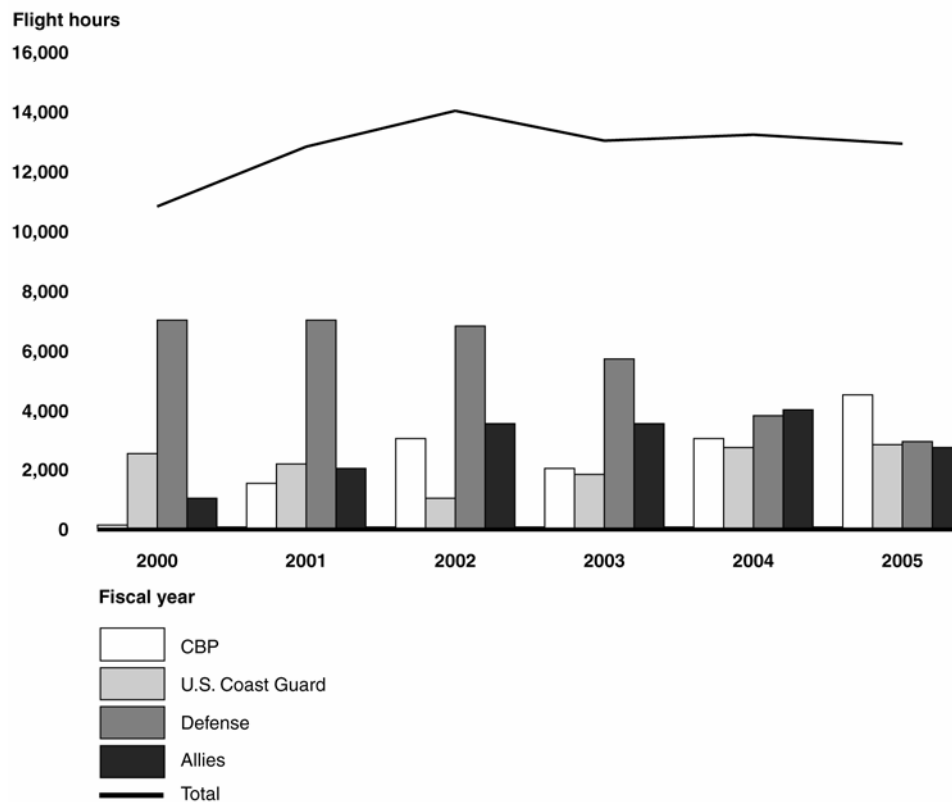
¹⁷ DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 17 (Nov. 2005).

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Id.

linchpin of maritime interdiction operations and play a key role virtually every significant maritime drug seizure. These aircraft provide the necessary detection and monitoring capability in the transit zones on which all other interdiction and law enforcement efforts depend.

On Station Flight Hours for Interdiction in the Transit Zone, Fiscal Years 2000-2005.



Source: JIATF-South and JIATF-West.

In his opening remarks to the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere on November 9, 2005, Chairman Dan Burton said that many of the air assets in the drug transit zone had been “...taken out of the interdiction business and committed to counter-terrorism and homeland security. This often leaves us with more actionable intelligence on drug shipments than assets to intercept them.” This lack of air assets often leaves law enforcement with no way to counteract drug shipments, leaving them to merely watch as drugs made their way into the country.²⁰

While the U.S. interdiction forces have seized records amounts of cocaine over the past three years²¹, the Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and DoD face

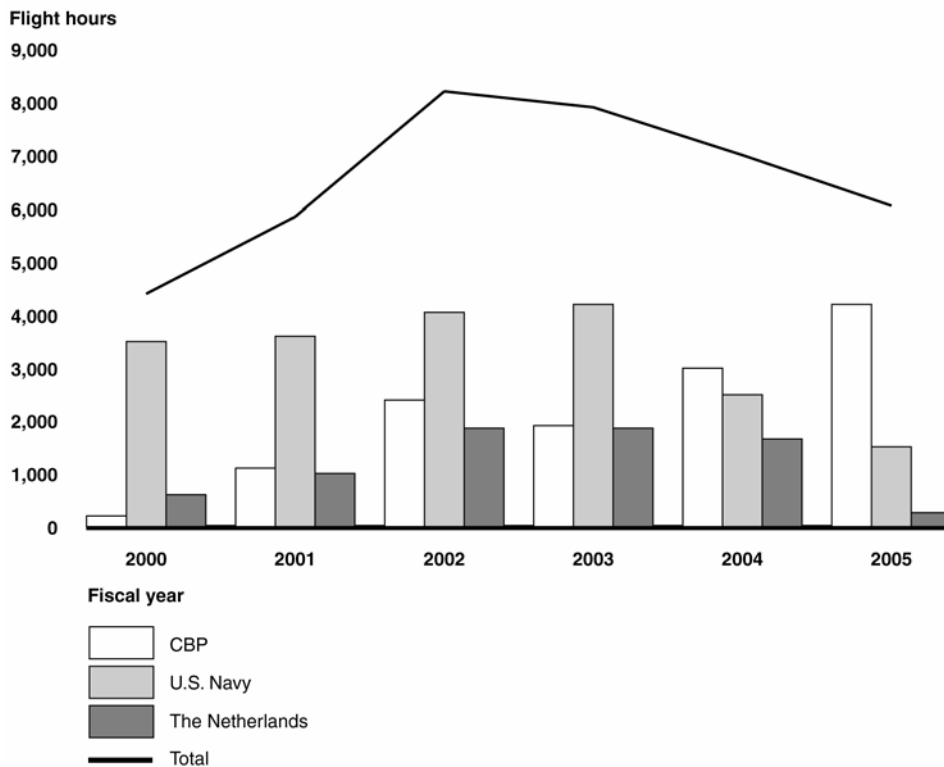
²⁰ See *Illicit Drug Transit Zone in Central America: Hearing before House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Committee on International Relations*, 109th Cong. (November 9, 2005)(statement of Chairman Dan Burton).

²¹ The White House, *National Drug Control Strategy*, (February 2006) at 33.

several challenges in maintaining current level of assets to support transit zone interdiction operations.

According to JIATF-South and U.S. Interdiction Coordinator officials, because of its longer range, the P-3 aircraft can monitor a much larger surface area than other maritime patrol aircraft and can provide covert surveillance until other interdiction assets arrive.²² As displayed in the nearby graph, the availability of the U.S. Navy P-3 maritime patrol aircraft has steadily declined since 2002, and will degrade JIATF-South's ability to detect and monitor maritime movements.²³ JIATF-South, Coast Guard, CBP, and U.S. Interdiction Coordinator officials stated that while some short-term fixes have been made, the longer-term implications of the likely continued declines in the monitoring and interdiction assets for the transit zone have not been addressed.²⁴ The Committee is concerned that the reduced availability of the U.S. Navy P-3 maritime patrol aircraft and the apparent lack of a suitable replacement aircraft are the most critical issues challenging the future of interdiction efforts in the transit zone.

Total P-3 On-Station Flight Hours in the Transit Zone, Fiscal Years 2000-2005



Source: JIATF-South and JIATF-West.

²² DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 18 (Nov. 2005).

²³ See *Interrupting Narco-terrorist Threats on the High Seas: Do We Have Enough Wind in Our Sails?* Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform, 109th Cong. (June 29, 2005)(testimony of Rear Admiral Jeffrey Hathaway, Director of JIATF-South).

²⁴ Id.

The availability of the P-3 aircraft has declined for several reasons. In fiscal years 2000-2003, the U.S. Navy provided the majority of P-3 maritime patrol flying hours in support of interdiction efforts. However, in FY 2004, the Navy began limiting the use of its P-3 maritime patrol aircraft for transit zone interdiction missions because of structural problems in the P-3's wings²⁵ and other worldwide commitments. Since FY 2000, the number of hours flown by U.S. Navy P-3s has decreased nearly 60 percent to about 1,500 hours in FY 2005.²⁶ In addition, in December 2004, the Netherlands removed the P-3 aircraft it used to fly interdiction missions in the transit zone and sold its planes to Germany for use in the Baltic. According to the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, the P-3s flown by the Netherlands were vital to interdiction efforts in the Caribbean Sea, averaging over 1,300 flight hours during fiscal years 2000-2004. In April 2005, the Netherlands began using the Fokker F-60, a shorter-range twin engine aircraft, to fly interdiction missions, but, according to Defense officials, these aircraft are less capable than the P-3.²⁷

Defense Department plans to support Maritime Patrol Aircraft

The steady reduction of DoD maritime patrol aircraft resource hours and the apparent gap in providing a replacement maritime patrol aircraft in the transit zone reflects woeful shortcomings in DoD's management of its detection and monitoring responsibilities. The Committee believes that if DoD is unable to fully perform its statutory responsibility as the lead Federal agency for the detection and monitoring of illicit drug trafficking, other agencies, most notably the enforcement agencies at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), should be provided the resources necessary to fill the void in illicit drug detection, monitoring and interdiction missions.

Customs and Border Protection plans to support Maritime Patrol Aircraft

To help compensate for the reduction in U.S. Navy P-3 availability, the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has increased its P-3 maritime patrol on-station flight hours in the transit zone from about 1,777 flight hours in 2000²⁸ to over 4,300 in 2005.²⁹ The Committee strongly supports CBP's

²⁵ The P-3 is a 40-year-old aircraft and has begun to develop cracks in its wing structure. Presently, the Navy plans to retire the P-3 and replace it with a different aircraft. However, the full fleet of aircraft will not be available until 2013, leaving a potential gap in Maritime Patrol hours.

²⁶ DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 18 (Nov. 2005).

²⁷ Id. at 19.

²⁸ Statistics provided in letter from Mary Beth Long, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics to Mark Souder, Chairman, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform (July 13, 2005)(on file with Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources).

increasing role in transit zone. However, CBP P-3 aircraft, which are formally owned and operated by the U.S. Navy, are challenged with the same maintenance issues of a Vietnam-era aircraft. The Committee has grave concerns about the apparent lack of replacement or service life extension plans for CBP's aging air fleet. Also, it is not clear what steps CBP or DHS, as a whole, are taking to ensure continued P-3 aircraft support to counterdrug missions in the transit zone, and are not diverted to other CBP mission areas.

We recommend that the DHS closely evaluate current CBP procurement and modernization proposals and submit recommendations to Congress that will maintain these critical MPA capabilities throughout the projected gap period before U.S. Navy replacement aircraft come on-line. Without these capabilities, DHS efforts to combat terrorism and illegal drug movements in the source, transit, and arrival zones and to provide interagency law enforcement support would be severely hindered and may threaten national security. The Committee recommends CBP Air program continue to fully support all international and MPA missions in the transit zones.

Coast Guard plans to support Maritime Patrol Aircraft

The Coast Guard, although hampered by its aging assets, has also attempted to rise to the task. The Service is now dedicating more maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) hours to drug interdiction missions since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.^{30 31}

However, the Coast Guard airframe which supports the MPA mission, the HC-130, is less capable than the P-3 aircraft, and the percentage of time the HC-130 maritime patrol surveillance aircraft were available to perform MPA missions was below the target level in fiscal year 2004. Additionally, the surface radar system on the aircraft is subject to frequent failures.³² In some instances, mission flight crews had to look out the windows of the aircraft for targets because the radar systems were inoperable.

The Administration has developed a strategic plan to replace the Coast Guard's aging ships and aircraft. The Committee believes the Coast Guard's Deepwater fleet modernization project is critical to U.S. transit zone drug interdictions. However, the Coast Guard needs to develop an aircraft that can effectively perform the MPA mission, with the type of radars and sensors capable of complementing the aging fleet of P-3 currently performing the mission. Consequently, the Administration and DHS need to ensure they are putting the right tools and equipment into the hands of Coast Guard men

²⁹ DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 19 (Nov. 2005).

³⁰ Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Staff budget summary briefing with U.S. Coast Guard officials on Nov. 17, 2005.

³¹ Resource hours committed to the drug interdiction mission include on-station hours spent on detection, monitoring and interdiction operations, and also transit hours needed for assets to get into position to begin operations.

³² DRUG CONTROL: AGENCIES NEED TO PLAN FOR LIKELY DECLINES IN DRUG INTERDICTION ASSETS, AND DEVELOP BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR TRANSIT ZONE OPERATIONS, GAO REPORT NO. 06-2000, at 21 (Nov. 2005).

and women so that they may continue to effectively interdict drugs on the high seas, and deliver the maritime safety and security America deserves.

Colombian Operations

U.S. military involvement in Colombia began in 2000 under “Plan Colombia” and was limited to training Colombian counternarcotics units, although U.S. forces now train the Colombian military in counterinsurgency operations. This change of emphasis is a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, whereby Colombia went from being a part of the “War on Drugs” to the “Global War on Terror” (GWOT). The danger to the Americas, even to those nations with long histories of self-determination, and of the political instability generated by drug trafficking was made clear by Chairman Tom Davis of the House Government Reform Committee on October 7, 2005, when he said of Colombia, “(It) is not only one of the oldest democracies in our hemisphere, but is also home to three terrorist groups who fund their guerilla activities with drugs smuggled into the U.S. for American consumption.”³³

Colombia occupies a unique position in the Administration’s global war on terror, in that its targeted terrorist groups are Marxist, as opposed to Islamic-based, and have no reported links to Al Qaeda or other Islamic groups. Colombia has been involved for almost forty years in what some describe as a civil war and others describe as a counterinsurgency campaign against three major groups. The first two groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) started in the 1950s as Marxist revolutionary groups but reportedly have lost most of their ideological support and have transformed into violent criminal organizations.³⁴ The other group, the rightist United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) is a conglomerate of illegal self-defense groups formed in rural areas where the Colombian government did not exert a strong presence.³⁵ All three groups allegedly fund their activities through drug revenues³⁶ and are on the Administration’s official list of terrorist organizations.³⁷

In June 2004 Congressional testimony before the House Committee on Government Reform, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict told House members that DoD and other U.S. agencies operating in Columbia, “...seek to systematically dismantle drug trafficking networks, both to halt the flow of drugs into the United States, and to bolster the broader war on terrorism effort.”³⁸

³³ Press Release, House Committee on Government Reform, (October 7, 2005) at www.reform.house.gov.

³⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Kevin W. Buckley, *U.S. Support to Plan Colombia: A Heading Check U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project*, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania at 1 (2004)(on file with U.S. Army War College).

³⁵ Id.

³⁶ Id.

³⁷ *Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, (U.S. State Department), 2004 at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/45323.pdf> (last visited February 24, 2006).

³⁸ See *The War Against Drugs and Thugs: A Status Report on Plan Colombia Successes and Remaining Challenges Hearing before Committee on Government Reform*, 108th Cong. (June 17, 2004) (testimony of Thomas O’Connell, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict).

Narcoterrorism was reported by Brigadier General Benjamin Mixon, Director of Operations, Southern Command in a hearing before Senate Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities in April 2004, as “...erode(ing) the very fabric of democracy by spawning terrorism, corrupting public institutions, promoting criminal activity, undermining legitimate economies and disrupting social order.”³⁹

DOD's CN efforts in SOUTHCOM (Colombia)

Consolidate gains while helping Colombia assume
responsibility for major programs.



Support to Colombia

- Build Armed Force capacity to defeat a narcoterrorist insurgency (Army, Navy, Air Force, Special Forces)
- Train forces to plan and operate in a joint environment
- Develop an entry level and a transition helicopter school
- Improve intelligence, logistical, and medical support
- Upgrade and provide maintenance for major systems
- Support Air Bridge Denial operations

FUNDING

	<u>FY05</u>	<u>FY06</u>
Fixed Costs	\$71.5M	\$81.8M
Discretionary Funds	\$77.4M	\$73.9M
TOTAL	\$148.9M	\$155.7M

Transitioning Responsibilities to Colombia

- Ground Based Radars Systems (2008)
- Helicopter Training Program (2009)
- Logistics and Maintenance Program

About 200 special forces soldiers are currently serving as trainers, where they are limited to training in garrison and planning support at headquarters, and another 200 troops provide “information support” including intelligence, leadership, and planning support.⁴⁰ Also contributing to Colombia’s success has been the Air Bridge Denial

³⁹ See *Testimony on the Department of Defense Counternarcotics Program in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2005 Hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, Senate Armed Services Committee*, 108th Cong. (April 2, 2004) (testimony of Brigadier General Benjamin Mixon, U.S. Army, Director of Operations, US Southern Command).

⁴⁰ Kathleen T. Rhem, *U.S. Military Helping Colombian Military Cope With Drug War's Legacy*, AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE, November 29, 2005.

program.⁴¹ In 2005, this program resulted in seven interdictions, five impounded aircraft, the destruction of two aircraft, and the seizure of 1.5 metric tons of cocaine in Colombia. Additionally, three aircraft and 2.1 metric tons of cocaine were impounded in neighboring countries after coordination between host nations and JIATF South.

In its Quadrennial Defense Review Report, released February 6, 2006, DoD justifiably recognized its part in the successes achieved in helping stabilize large tracts of Colombia.

U.S. Southern Command's support for Plan Colombia is yet another example of preventive action. The United States has worked with the Government of Colombia to combat the production and trafficking of illegal drugs. In 2002, at the request of the Administration, Congress granted expanded authorities to help the Colombian Government wage a unified campaign against terrorism as well as drugs, and thereby assert effective control over its territory. This broader mission has helped the Colombian Government seize the initiative against illegal armed groups, demobilize thousands of illegal paramilitaries, decrease violence and return to government authority areas that had been under the control narcoterrorists for decades.⁴²

The Committee strongly recommends that the Department continue to fully support these important programs. These efforts, combined with the Government of Colombia's efforts to attack powerful drug traffickers and extradite them to the United States has produced unparalleled results⁴³ and need to remain robust to be effective.

DOD

General Myers said it was clear there was a connection between terrorism and the drug business, both in South America and the Middle East.⁴⁴ Mary Beth Long, Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary for Counternarcotics testified in June 2005, that Colombian narcoterrorists receive the majority of their funds from protecting, "taxing" and engaging in this illegal drug trade, and they seek to overthrow the freely elected Colombian government, the oldest democracy in Latin America.⁴⁵ "Financial, political and

⁴¹ The White House, National Drug Control Strategy, (February 2006), at 20.

⁴² *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (DOD), Feb. 2006, at 14. At <http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf> (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁴³ The White House, National Drug Control Strategy, (February 2006), at 21.

⁴⁴ Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers on January 6, 2004 at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/> (last visited February 24, 2006)

⁴⁵ See *2006 DoD Counternarcotics Budget: Does It Deliver the Necessary Support? Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform*, 109th Cong. (May 10, 2005)(Testimony of Mary Beth Long, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics). At <http://reform.house.gov/CJDPHR/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=26864>.

operational linkages already exist among narcotics trafficking, smuggling at large, and the regional and global expansion and movement of terrorists.”⁴⁶

The lack of maritime patrol aircraft assets supporting JIATF South is a crisis, as the U.S. has been unable to respond to known shipments of drugs departing Colombia into the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific transit zone. Credible intelligence information far exceeds our ability to respond to these shipments. The Committee believes that if DoD is unable to fully support the detection and monitoring mission, other agencies, most notably the enforcement agencies at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), should be provided the resources necessary to fill the critical void in drug detection, monitoring and interdiction missions.

Maritime Refueling Vessel for the Eastern Pacific

The Committee is aware of and concerned about the flow of drugs bound for the U.S. and recognizes the unique challenges and vulnerabilities associated with U.S. interdiction efforts in the transit zone. At the May 11, 2005 House International Relations Committee hearing, Speaker Dennis Hastert testified that Congress “must continue to find ways to stop those illicit drugs that are not eradicated from traveling through the transit zone to our shores.”⁴⁷

In the Eastern Pacific transit area, which is larger than the continental U.S., there are, on average, four ships dedicated to the drug interdiction mission. The example is certainly sobering: four ships to patrol an area larger than the continental U.S., trying to stop smugglers who will risk everything to evade U.S. law enforcement efforts.⁴⁸

Andean Counterdrug Initiative

The State Department’s INL Bureau and its Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) have both received “adequate” ratings in the Administration’s CY 2005 Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process.⁴⁹ The Committee supports the programs’ efforts to develop long-term performance and efficiency measures.

The Committee supports the Administration’s request for \$721.5 million for the ACI but is disappointed that it represents a \$5.7 million decrease from \$727.2 million appropriated for FY 2006. The ACI budget provides support to Colombia, Peru, Bolivia,

⁴⁶ Department of Defense, Office of Counternarcotics policy statement describing the link between counternarcotics and terrorism, at http://defenselink.mil/policy/sections/policy_offices/solic/cn/cn_terrorism.html.

⁴⁷ See *Plan Colombia: Major Successes and New Challenges*, Hearing before the House Committee on International Relations, 109th Cong. (May 11, 2005) (testimony of Speaker Dennis Hastert).

²² Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources visit to Eleventh Coast Guard District, Alameda, CA, on Nov. 29, 2005.

⁴⁹ The White House, National Drug Control Strategy, FY 2006 Budget Summary (February 2005) at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/policy/06budget/06budget.pdf>. See also <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/59169.pdf> (last visited February 24, 2006).

Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and Panama.⁵⁰ These funds are needed to continue programs in law enforcement, border control, crop reduction, alternative economic development, democratic institution building, and administration of justice and human rights programs in the region. It is critical to maintain the priority of funding drug control programs in Colombia, since 90 percent of the cocaine that enters the United States either originates in, or transits through, Colombia.⁵¹

The Committee is also concerned that out of the \$465 million the Administration has requested for Colombia under ACI, at least \$13 million will be taken from the ACI funding and designated for the Air Bridge Denial program, which provides assets to conduct surveillance and drug interdiction in Colombia. The Air Bridge Denial program was once a separate line item with separate funding and requests, in order to facilitate Congressional oversight.⁵² This is a slight decrease from the \$14 million appropriated in FY 2006.⁵³ Moreover, the request is 1/3 lower than the State Department FY 2006 request for \$21 million.⁵⁴ Because the President's FY 2007 request was only \$2 million more than the amount appropriated in FY 2006, this represents an overall \$11 million decrease in ACI funding devoted to interdiction in Colombia.

It is crucial that the State Department be provided with appropriate air assets and equipment, which are essential to the counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism missions in the Andean Region. In its FY 2007 budget, the Administration has requested \$65.7 million for the Critical Flight Safety Program (CFSP), which is intended to upgrade aged and ailing aircraft. While this seems like a noble objective, the Committee is concerned that this sum of money has been designated solely for upgrading 35 year-old helicopters, with over 10,100 airframe hours, instead of purchasing new aircraft, which will serve their mission for a longer period of time.⁵⁵ For the amount of money designated to refurbish 35 year-old helicopters - with 6,000 more airframe hours than DoD customarily allows its helicopters to remain in service⁵⁶ - the Administration may be able to purchase nearly 20 new Huey II helicopters.

⁵⁰ The White House, National Drug Control Strategy, FY 2007 Budget Summary (February 2006) at http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/policy/07budget/dept_state.pdf (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁵¹ Connie Veillette, *Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) and Related Funding Programs: FY2006 Assistance*, CRS Report No. RL 33253 (Congressional Research Service) January 27, 2006, at <http://www.congress.gov/erp/rl/pdf/RL33253.pdf> (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁵² *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2007: Appendix*, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2007/appendix.html> (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁵³ See CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 3057 (FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2006) H.R. CONF. REP. P.L. 109-102, at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_bills&docid=f:h3057eh.txt.pdf (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁵⁴ BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT, (March 2005). At <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2005/vol1/html/42361.htm> (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁵⁵ *Summary and Highlights: International Affairs, Function 150, Fiscal Year 2007*, (U.S. Department of State, The Secretary of State), at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/60297.pdf> (last visited February 24, 2006).

⁵⁶ *Id.*

Following seven years of counter drug work, our efforts in Colombia are increasingly bearing concrete results directly impacting the domestic supply in America. The price of cocaine and heroin originating from the Andean region has risen and the purity has decreased.⁵⁷ These successes are due in large part to interdiction missions carried out by the Marine Patrol Aircraft (MPA) and other air-based interdiction efforts. In order to capitalize on these gains, the Committee agrees with International Relations Committee Chairman, Henry Hyde, in urging the State Department to replenish and bolster MPA air assets for the Colombian Navy.⁵⁸

In addition, in order to produce successful efforts to stem the flow of illicit narcotics from the Andean Region, participating parties must be adequately supplied with surveillance assets. The Committee is pleased with the progress being made to train more Bell 212 pilots and to equip these aircrafts with Night Vision Goggle (NVG) capabilities as a part of the plan to improve the technical capacity of the Colombian National Police (CNP). INL held an NVG training session in early January 2006 for 5 Bell 212 pilots. In addition, INL has recently placed an order for 42 upgrade kits for ANVIS-6 NVGs, totaling \$284,000, as well as an order for 52 new ANVIS-9 goggles, totaling \$454,000. These new NVGs and the upgrade kits will be delivered in May 2006.⁵⁹

The Committee believes the Administration should take a more active role to ensure that the U.S. Government provides financial and technical support for Colombia's demobilization program. Under this program, former members of narco-terrorist organizations (such as the FARC, ELN and AUC) agree to lay down their weapons, stop drug trafficking, provide valuable intelligence to Colombia's security agencies, and seek employment in the civilian economy. Recently, a legal dispute between the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Justice has delayed American support for Colombia's demobilization program and has squandered important opportunities. The Administration should actively seek to resolve those differences immediately to prevent any further disruption in U.S. support for this vital program.

Finally, the Committee commends the work of INL to stem the international flow of illicit drugs across our American borders and into our neighborhoods. However, the lack of significant coordination between agencies to achieve this goal is a vital concern. The Committee is disappointed that the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Defense cannot agree on where to station crucial air assets, and that they cannot reach an agreement on a counter-narcotics mission. The Committee is gravely concerned by the lack of coordination among USG agencies to achieve a comprehensive, counter-narcotics strategy and recommends that ONDCP take a prominent leadership role in developing and coordinating a strategy.

⁵⁷ Letter from Henry Hyde, Chairman of the International Relations Committee, to Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State (February 14, 2006)(on file with the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources).

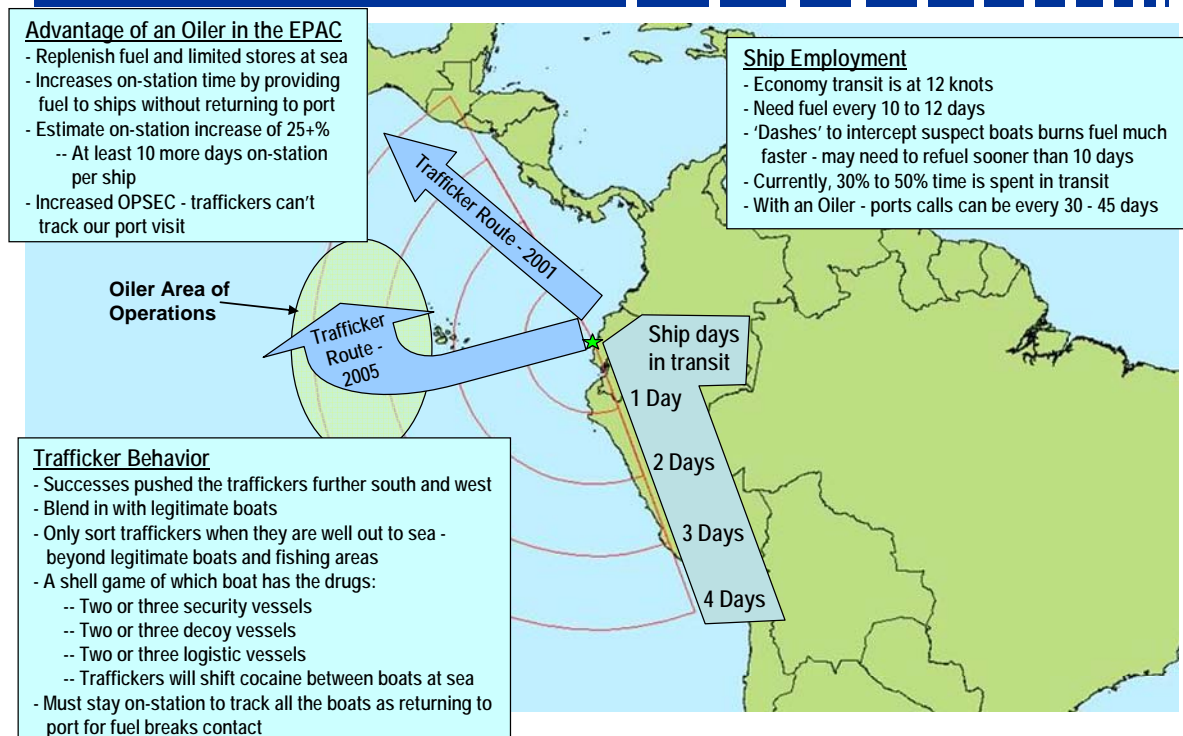
⁵⁸ Id.

⁵⁹ Id.



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U.S. Ships Refueling in Manta, Ecuador



The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security report that narcotics smuggling organizations continue to avoid U.S. drug interdiction efforts by transiting deep into the Eastern Pacific ocean, often south and west of the Galapagos Islands, which is well beyond the endurance of employed U.S. ships.⁶⁰ The graphic nearby details this intentional, evasive strategy on the part of smugglers that strikes at this persistent, yet unaddressed, vulnerability of U.S. efforts. The traffickers have developed a sophisticated refueling system using support ships, while the U.S. has nothing similar.

Drug smugglers use the Eastern Pacific transit zone for moving narcotics into Mexico and then the United States. On any given day, U.S. and Allied forces seize an

⁶⁰ Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources briefing at JIATF-South, Key West, Florida, Jan. 13, 2006.

average of 100 kilograms of cocaine per ship when patrolling in the Eastern Pacific maritime transit zone. Because of the lack of a maritime oiler ship, the U.S. Coast Guard estimates it loses 100 “ship-days” each year due to lengthy refueling trips to central and South American countries.⁶¹ U.S. Navy ships conducting drug interdiction operations also face similar refueling challenges.

As detailed above, interdiction efforts in the maritime transit zones are hampered by the absence of a refueling ship. The U.S. needs a maritime refueling vessel in the Eastern Pacific transit zone for drug interdiction operations. U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, and Allied warships performing drug interdiction missions currently have no “at-sea” refueling capability in that area and thus cannot operate for any significant length of time before they must return to port to refuel.

Andean Counterdrug Initiative and Alternative Development

The Committee supports the Administration’s FY 2007 request for \$721.5 million for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative but is disappointed that it represents a \$13 million decrease from \$734.5 million appropriated for FY 2006⁶². Of this FY 2007 request, nearly \$207 million⁶³ will be allocated to USAID in order to carry out alternative development and institution-building programs. This money will fund projects needed to continue the enforcement, border control, crop reduction, alternative economic development, democratic institution building, and administration of justice and human rights programs in the region.

While the Committee applauds the work of USAID in the Andean Region, it is concerned with the decrease in FY 2007 funding for its alternative development program within the Andean Counterdrug Initiative.

USAID has the responsibility to take effective action to eliminate illicit coca production and to establish licit, sustainable farm-level production capacity and economic stability in countries throughout the Andean Region. USAID uses ACI funds for

⁶¹ See *Interrupting Narco-terrorist Threats on the High Seas: Do We Have Enough Wind in Our Sails?* Hearing before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform, 109th Cong. (June 29, 2005)(testimony of Rear Admiral Dennis Sirois, Assistant Commandant for Operations, U.S. Coast Guard). At <http://reform.house.gov/CJDPHR/Hearings/EventSingle.aspx?EventID=29727>

⁶² The Conference Report on H.R. 3057, Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-102), provides \$734.5 million for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, of which \$228.8 million was directed for alternative development and institution building programs, to be carried out by USAID. Of this amount, \$131.2 million was allocated for Colombia; \$37,000 for Bolivia; \$11,540 for Ecuador; and \$49,000 for Peru.

⁶³ Press Release, U.S. Agency for International Development, *USAID Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Request* (February 8, 2006) at <http://www.usaid.gov/press/factsheets/2006/fs060208.html> (last visited February 24, 2006).

programs in four Andean countries - Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.⁶⁴ These programs include expanding a licit agricultural economy, assisting displaced groups, strengthening democratic institutions, promoting the rule of law, human rights, and judicial reform. This work is crucial to our nation's drug control strategy and must be funded at appropriate levels.⁶⁵

The Committee believes that the USAID counter-narcotics mission should coordinate more effectively with the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), and because of their expertise, INL must take a more active lead in the apportioning of designated dollars. USAID acknowledges how important its efforts are in the ACI supply reduction and alternative development efforts, and therefore, monies spent must be included in the national drug budget.

The ACI budget provides support to Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and Panama. The Subcommittee is concerned that the 13 percent reduction between 2003 and the Administration's 2005 request for the initiative (from \$841 million to \$731 million) stifles the hard-earned successes that have recently become evident.

⁶⁴ *Summary and Highlights: International Affairs, Function 150, Fiscal Year 2007*, U.S. Department of State.

⁶⁵ USAID Budget Justification to the Congress FY 2006, at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2006/summary.html> visited February 24, 2006).